



**ARTS 545: Studio 6 / Thesis Topics  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Margie Bowles

**Class Meeting Times:** Monday 6:00pm - 10:00pm (8/25/14 to 12/5/14)

**Class Meeting Location:** Universities Center at Dallas, Room TBD

**Consultation Hours:** Monday – Friday, 9am-6pm (by appointment only)

**Office Phone:** 214.744-1409, ext. 1

**Office Fax:** 214.744-1411

**Email Address:** mbowles@1400words.com

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Research Sources:**

1. Various sources identified through the student's individual research, or sources suggested by thesis committee members germane to the progress and direction of the thesis research and exhibition agenda.
2. Academic texts, peer-reviewed articles, scholarly papers, accessed either through brick-and-mortar libraries or online in scholarly databases, such as JSTOR. **NOT books written for popular culture!!**
3. Other major design university MFA archives (SVA, VCU, Stanford D-school)
4. AIGA archives
5. Periodicals: *Print, Communication Arts, I.D., Fast Company, etc.*
6. Media: Broadcast news channels, credible newspapers or magazines
7. Anything, anywhere that is relevant to your topic (recorded interviews, ethnography, etc.)
8. **NOT Wikipedia!!!**

**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide you with enlightenment, direction, feedback and focus as you embark your thesis discovery process. This class will function primarily as a think tank dedicated to defining, examining, discussing and furthering the ideas that you bring to the table. Each person will ultimately present three viable, worthwhile abstracts to an outside guest panel for feedback that will validate and focus your final thesis direction.

This class will demand more from you outside of class as YOU must bring new ideas and/or content every week. The time and effort spent on this class through outside exploration will yield invaluable capital going forward into your final thesis development. Trust me on this.

**Course Goals/ Structure:** This class structure will be a combination of lecture/discussion and critiques with both in-class and outside exercises and assignments. A commitment to homework will be necessary to achieve the goals for this class and its completion. Critique participation, as well as class discussion and collaboration that furthers each student's work will be a required component to a productive class dynamic and positive outcome. It is imperative that you keep an open mind (own the process) throughout this class and plug into all of the work presented every class.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand through examination and discovery what a relevant thesis is, and isn't
2. Learn the specific criteria of a viable thesis topic
3. Expand and develop a wide range of possible thesis directions through informed class discussion and research
4. Explore thesis exhibition / product directions through ideation and critique
5. Develop abstracts for multiple thesis directions
6. Present abstracts to a pre-thesis committee panel for examination and feedback
7. Develop formal thesis and IRB proposals

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:**

A willingness to participate and collaborate will be a key component in a productive and positive outcome for each student. It is the job of the student to follow the schedule and adhere to it on a weekly basis. The role of the professor and the class is to respond to the work that is brought in week-by-week and comment, direct, expand on, and suggest possible areas for further research.

**Grading: IT IS POSSIBLE TO FAIL THIS CLASS.** Your final grade will be based on your week-by-week progress, attendance, class participation and commitment to your research and success of your final thesis topics for presentation. Deadlines are serious, and meeting each one is mandatory. Grading will be based on a 4-tier rubric:

- “+” A “+” grade for any given assignment designates above-average performance, commensurate to the letter grade of “A.”
- “✓” A “✓” grade for any given assignment designates average performance—enough to get by—commensurate to the letter grade of “B.”
- “-“ A “-“ grade for any given assignment designates below-average performance, commensurate to the letter grade of “C.”
- “x” A “x” grade for any given assignment designates a lack of performance or failure to comply, commensurate to the letter grade of “F.”

A grading percentage breakout is provided below. Grades will be discussed on an individual basis by appointment only—not in class.

1. Ten weekly assignments—exploration, ideation, abstract, and sketchbook development ..... 40.0%
2. Pre-thesis committee panel presentation..... 15.0%
3. Formal approval of at least one thesis direction by semester’s end ..... 10.0%
4. Completion of formal thesis proposal and IRB application by semester’s end ..... 15.0%
5. Course notebooks and CDs..... 10.0%
6. Attitude and Participation ..... 10.0%
7. **NOTE: Failure to (1) attend and participate in the pre-thesis committee panel presentation, (2) obtain approval of at least one thesis direction by semester’s end and/or (3) complete a formal thesis proposal and IRB application by semester’s end will result in an automatic F in the class.**

## BOOKS

MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Home Computer

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

**Interaction with Instructor Statement:** In addition to classroom time, you are welcome to call or email me at any time with questions or concerns (mbowles@1400words.com or 214-744-1409, ext 1). Announcements from the University will come to you through its network.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

**Course Specific Procedures:** Three absences or three missed thesis committee meetings will result in failing the class. You must notify the instructor in advance if you are going to miss a class.

1. On your first unexcused absence you will receive an e-mail warning from your instructor that will be copied to Virgil Scott and filed.
2. On your second absence (excused or unexcused) you will receive an e-mail warning from your instructor that will be copied to Virgil Scott and filed.
3. On your third absence (excused or unexcused) you will receive an F in the class.
4. Failure to attend and participate in the pre-thesis committee panel presentation will result in an automatic F in the class.

### ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
**Fax (903) 468-8148**

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

### Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).